NATIONAL CONGRESS
Bulletin

MARCH, 1940

NATIONAL CONGRESS OF PARENTS AND TEACHERS
600 South Michigan Boulevard Chicago, Illinois

Vol. 7 — No. 7

Dear Local President:

Recently I received a letter from a mother who wanted to voice to me her appreciation of what the parent-teacher association had meant to her. "I joined the P.T.A.," she wrote, "and there I found some real people. They were friendly and unselfish. They worked hard to benefit the children and the young people. They did all they could to hold the community together."

Where is this association located? Among the local presidents who read this message, there will be thousands who will recognize their own associations in this picture — thousands who will say happily and humbly, "She is describing my own association." Regardless of how large or small the sum of our year's achievements, here is the truest reward that our experience will ever hold. And for all of us who devote our time and affection and effort to this parent-teacher work, there will be warmth and joy and thrill in the knowledge that this is the sort of people that are *our* people, whose loyalty and sacrifice make possible this nationwide work for our children.

Loyally yours,

Frances S. Pettengill

President,
National Congress of Parents and Teachers

1940 NATIONAL CONVENTION, OMAHA, MAY 6-9

CONFERENCES

ONE of the most important features of the National Convention will be the twenty-four committee conferences which will be conducted by the national chairmen of committees. These conferences will be held from 8:30 to 10:00 a. m. on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, May 7, 8, and 9. The subjects range alphabetically from Art to the Summer Round-Up of the Children, and cover all phases of the national program as it is carried on by P. T. A.'s in thousands of communities scattered all over the country.

The purpose of these committee conferences is to bring to the delegates the latest information as to parent-teacher activities in the specific fields of committee work; to give delegates from various sections of the country an opportunity to exchange experiences and points of view; to assist parent-teacher workers in developing more effective programs in their local communities.

Some conferences are being planned to present specifically the parent-teacher aspects of the committee subjects. Some will stress the correlation of parent-teacher activities for the promotion of democracy. Other conferences will be related to the convention theme, "And the Pursuit of Happiness."

NOMINATIONS

THE nominating committee to nominate officers to be elected at the National Convention has submitted the following list of nominees:

For President: Mrs. William Kletzer, Portland, Oregon
For First Vicepresident: Mrs. William A. Hastings, Madison, Wisconsin
For Vicepresident from Region I: Mr. Howard V. Funk, Bronxville, N. Y.
For Secretary: Mrs. Charles D. Center, College Park, Georgia
For Treasurer: Mrs. James K. Lytle, Los Angeles, California

PAN AMERICAN DAY
APRIL 14TH

• Pan American Day this year will have an especial significance, for it will mark the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Pan American Union at the First International Conference of American States.

The first Conference met in Washington in April, 1890, not to consider wars or the results of wars, but to reinforce and strengthen the principles governing friendly relations between the nations of the western world. Out of this meeting came the Pan American Union, which was a pioneer experiment in international relations.

The Pan American Union is a great clearinghouse of information on questions affecting the interest and welfare of the nations and people of the American Continent. International law and the development of machinery for the preservation of peace have always been of major interest, and a comprehensive organization has been developed to codify international law.

Eight Pan American Conferences have been held at five-year intervals during this period, the last at Lima, Peru, in December, 1938.

This year's Congress is to be known as the American Scientific Congress. Discussions will cover the whole range of modern culture and its implications for the Western Hemisphere — including health, geology, economics, law education, conservation, language, geography, botany, physics, chemistry.

President Roosevelt will formally open the Pan American Congress on the evening of Friday, May 10, at the Pan American Union in the presence of members of the President's Cabinet, members of the Congress of the United States, and the various diplomatic representatives of the other American republics, together with delegates and participants in the Congress. The Conference will close Tuesday, May 21.

SIGNPOSTS AND GUIDES

Facing Today's Issues

"Education must take into account the changing philosophy of our social democracy. Facing controversial issues is basic to the working out of social concepts in a democracy."
— FROM THE 1939 CONVENTION FINDINGS

• "In controversial subjects, my •
• perception's rather fine, •
• I always see both points of view •
• —the one that's wrong and mine." •

THIS bit of verse, which has been widely quoted in recent months, may be a reflection of the attitude of many adults in the community toward controversial issues.

These issues grow out of the realities of life today such as concentration of population, mechanized entertainment, altered modes of living, and insecurity of employment. These problems have brought about such wide variation in ideals as to cause the development of many points of view. Pressure groups have arisen to promote their own interests in connection with these attitudes, and their activities constitute an important factor in the possible solution of the problems of the day.

Citizens, however, do seek enlightenment on all phases of a subject in order to function intelligently in working out the social concepts of a democracy. Ever since the founding of the republic the belief has been voiced that the enlightenment of the people is of primary importance to the development of the government. Parent-teacher associations can render a real service by keeping their members aware of the problems of today through educational programs in the association; and by encouraging them to utilize outside channels such as lectures, radio broadcasts, reading, motion pictures, discussion groups, public forums, and other public sources of information.

LECTURES

When controversial issues are under discussion, a series of lectures is often held, featuring different points of view. A lecture followed by a discussion period is a very practical method of introducing a group to the various aspects of a question.

The lecturer is usually a specialist who has devoted a great deal of time to a critical study of his subject, and is able to present his views with clarity and with objectivity. Such lectures tend to develop a more intelligent understanding of the issues of the day.

RADIO BROADCASTS

The radio is presenting programs of timely interest to citizens in a democracy, setting forth all phases of controversial issues. Many parent-teacher associations promote the organization of listening-in groups and the use of listeners' guides and aids. Broadcasts of the forum, town meeting, round-table, and public platform types demonstrate the possibility of full and free discussion of many sides of controversial issues. Through the radio parent-teacher members have constant opportunity to become better informed concerning educational and social problems of children and youth.

PRINTED MATERIALS

The printed word in a nation of literate people has unlimited power to express and to formulate public opinion. Books, magazines, pamphlets, and newspapers contain a wealth of subject matter pertaining to social questions. They play a most significant part in diffusing knowledge about government and social problems. But back of much of this printed material are commercial enterprises which represent commercial interests, and a discriminating member will evaluate in terms of parent-teacher ideals the worth of the printed word.

MOTION PICTURES

Directly and indirectly the screen has depicted the changing philosophy of our social democracy. When parent-teacher members depend alone upon the screen to keep them informed concerning controversial issues, they may see only extremes of social concepts, overbalance of values, and artificial situations. Motion pictures are generally regarded as a means of recreation and entertainment, but they may also be instrumental in stimulating consideration of the social problems of the day.

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION GROUPS

These groups offer opportunity to all interested citizens to study, discuss, and exchange experiences and ideas regarding present-day community and civic problems. The study and discussion of topics of timely interest will bring out many variations in ideas. An evaluation of these various opinions will enable members of the group to arrive at intelligent decisions in regard to the changing philosophy of our social order.

PUBLIC FORUMS

Public forums make available analyses of national and international problems; they place at the service of the adults of the community, experts who are trained in the art of presenting complicated and controversial issues; they encourage adults to use more intelligently the printed information available to them; they develop among adults the technique and habit of discussion.

Parent-teacher members who attend public forums are stimulated to think through the issues of the day as they pertain to the welfare of children and youth, and to accept the responsibility of citizenship in helping to solve current problems.

• • •

HOMES, schools, and communities are today confronted with the public demand for full information on controversial issues to counteract intelligently unwholesome effects of pressure. Many opportunities are available today to enable parent-teacher members to take into account altered modes of living and the changing philosophy of our social democracy, and to face intelligently the realities of life and the variations in social ideals. By becoming informed concerning all phases of controversial subjects, the parent-teacher members may serve more effectively within their group and within their community as citizens with confidence and with purpose.

THROUGH THE YEAR WITH THE P.T.A.

March: History is Recorded

I. PURPOSE AND VALUE OF ANNUAL REPORTS

THE annual report is the medium through which the year's work of the parent-teacher association is brought to the attention of the entire membership. It is an excellent medium by which to acquaint the membership with the accomplishments of the association, and thereby to win new friends for parent-teacher work.

Reports are valuable —

1. *As records of accomplishment.*
2. *As a means of comparing the actual work done with the plans adopted.*
3. *As a basis for planning future activities.*
4. *As part of the historical record of the association.*

The accumulation of annual reports is the record of the association through the years. Reports reflect the action and achievement of the parent-teacher organization. They tell the story of what progress is being made toward the attainment of Congress objectives — of what is being accomplished by organized parents and teachers for the welfare of the Nation's children and youth.

II. CONTENT

THE local association usually presents to the membership and preserves for its records detailed information concerning the work of officers, committees, and individuals to whom specific activities and projects are assigned.

Certain reports are limited by the nature of activities involved, such as the reports of the treasurer, budget chairman, auditor, and others involving statistical information. However, there is no reason why parent-teacher reports should not be made interesting, and a means of stimulating thought and possibly action on the part of the members.

There are many individuals, however, who undertake the preparation of an annual report as though it were a matter of recording statistical information only. They set down the number of members, meetings, dollars and cents, and other statistics, but omit the living, vital, human aspects of the work done.

Annual reports should give a comprehensive picture of the year's work. Reports should interpret the year's events, pointing out their significance in relation to the work of the association, and discussing fully and clearly the needs met and unmet.

The president's annual report to the association is usually concerned with those policies and activities which are the responsibility of the association as a whole or of the executive committee. Emphasis may be given to important activities and projects. The report contains an account of duties and activities carried out by the president as chief officer and representative of the organization.

The annual report of a committee is the responsibility of the chairman, who prepares it with the assistance and approval of the committee. Committee reports should always be a product of the group, rather than of one person. The annual report should contain salient facts about the year's achievements, a summary of recommendations if any have been adopted, and essential statistical information.

III. PRESENTATION

SOME reports may be adapted to various forms of presentation. Merely to read the annual report is not always the most interesting and enlightening way to review the year.

An interesting and enthusiastic presentation of reports can arouse interest and enthusiasm among the membership. Among popular variations in the method of presenting reports are these:

1. *Dramatic features.*
2. *Tableaux and pageants.*
3. *Skits and playlets.*
4. *An information quiz.*
5. *Roundtable.*
6. *Charts, graphs, and pictorial statistics.*

Statistical reports should be presented in such a way that they are readily understandable. It is particularly important that information concerning the finances of the organization be presented so effectively that members know what the association's funds are, whence they are derived, how they are spent, and why.

IV. ANNUAL REPORTS AS PERMANENT RECORDS

ANNUAL reports in the form in which they were adopted by the association are placed in the custody of the person authorized by the bylaws, or by the parliamentary authority named in the bylaws, or by vote of the association. Thus annual reports become part of the permanent records of the organization.

LOCAL UNIT REPORT

Each local congress unit is asked to make an annual report to the state congress on the Local Unit Report blank supplied by the National Congress or state branch. From local unit reports, each state compiles data for inclusion in the Annual Summary of Local Unit Information of the National Congress.

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Volume 7 MARCH Number 7

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NATIONAL PARENT-TEACHER

News About Our Magazine

OUR Magazine is a potent factor in developing better public relations between the home, the school, and the community. It is published *by* parents and teachers *for* parents and teachers.

• Last year 60,000 people paid the *full subscription price* of $1 for the Magazine. If 60,000 parents and teachers found it worth a dollar, there are 60,000 other parents and teachers who will find it worth their while to subscribe. To bring it to their immediate attention the enthusiastic support, cooperation, and leadership of each of our 28,000 local parent-teacher presidents is needed. Will you participate in this project? Will you, during *April* and *May*, make a special effort to secure a wider use of the *National Parent-Teacher* in your association?

• The following plan has been used extensively and successfully by many local groups. You may be able to use it in whole or in part. It may suggest other ways in which you can stimulate interest in the Magazine.

A PLAN FOR SECURING SUBSCRIPTIONS

1. *APPOINTMENT OF A SPECIAL COMMITTEE* to present the merits of the Magazine. Committee personnel: Chairmen of Publications, Magazine, Program, Publicity, and Membership. (If the association is large, other members and chairmen may be added to the committee.)

2. *MAGAZINE DISPLAY* at association meeting. The display creates special interest and paves the way for the *special committee* to contact the membership. Posters may be made by:

   (a) Reproducing one of the covers of a recent issue.

   (b) Pasting on poster boards articles cut from the Magazine. (Articles that have illustrations are used because drawings attract attention.)

   (c) "Blowing up" a page in the Magazine. Local photographers often have facilities for reproducing pages from magazines in two or three times the original size.

3. *OFFICIAL SPONSORSHIP.* At a meeting of the association the local president arranges for a short presentation of the place of the Magazine in parent-teacher work and its value to parents and teachers. An informal statement by some subscriber who has found the material of practical assistance is effective in stimulating interest. The members of the *special committee* are then introduced.

4. *PUBLICITY.* Since the *National Parent-Teacher* is an official magazine, devoted exclusively to the welfare of children and youth, local newspaper editors often cooperate in bringing it to the attention of the public through —

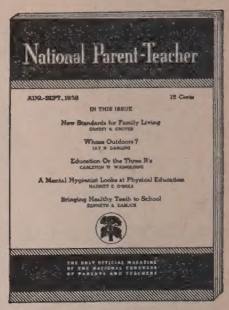
   (a) Reviews of articles.

   (b) Announcement of subscription campaign.

   (c) Information Quiz based on material in the Magazine.

5. *MEMBERSHIP CONTACT.* The members of the *special committee* arrange to interview each member of the association. Care is exercised in introducing the *National Parent-Teacher* as a service to the member — not as "just another magazine." Since the *National Parent-Teacher* is a noncommercial, nonprofit-making publication, no one benefits from the sale of a subscription except the subscriber himself. It is important to make this clear to prospective subscribers.

6. *SUPPLIES.* Each member of the *special committee* should have a sample copy of the Magazine, an ample supply of subscription blanks, and an official receipt book. The subscription blanks and receipt book will be sent free from the National Office upon request of the local president. Sample copies are usually available from the state office; if not, they may be secured from the National Office upon receipt of 10c for each copy.



HOW STATE GROUPS ARE USING THE MAGAZINE

A LEADERS' training class in a county council in Ohio meets every month to follow the course in the *National Parent-Teacher* magazine on "American Youth." A specialist on each month's topic addresses the class. Many of those who take the course act as leaders for the same lesson at the next discussion group in their own local units.

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An association in North Carolina conducted a meeting that was interesting and original. The Program committee cooperated with the Magazine committee in preparing a dramatization of material in the *National Parent-Teacher.* The scene portrayed the meeting of these two committees in a private home. There followed a discussion based on "Children's Quarrels" and "I Can Do It Myself"—both articles from the current volume of our official publication.

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The article, "For Want of a Nail," was discussed by two ministers at a meeting of a local group in Iowa.

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A discussion group in Pennsylvania uses the Parent-Teacher Study Course outline published in each issue of the *National Parent-Teacher.* A dramatization is presented to portray and to emphasize the high lights of the Magazine article to be covered. Before the sketch is given the leader gives a résumé of the article. "The Farmer Has a Son," was used with a dramatization, "Learning Together," and "Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary," with a dramatization called "Who Makes Social Codes." It is reported that this method of approach to the parent education program is meeting with great success.

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A parent-teacher association in Minnesota, with the largest membership in its history, has four study groups, each using the *National Parent-Teacher* magazine.